

Address of Justice Heriot Clarkson,
Unveiling at St. Marks Church, Memorial Tablet
to Rt. Rev. Joseph Blount Cheshire, Jr., and
Rev. Edwin Augustus Osborne.

Sunday, November 26th, 1933.

For over a half century Rt. Rev. Jos. Blount Cheshire, Jr., and Rev. Edwin Augustus Osborne were beacon lights for the Protestant Episcopal Church in North Carolina. During that long period the golden cord of friendship bound the two soldiers of the Cross together to carry forward the ideals of the Christian religion, in our beloved State and elsewhere - the hope of the World. Can I be so bold as to say that in all these years it has been my privilege to have known them intimately.

Bishop Cheshire was my pastor at St. Peters Protestant Episcopal Church at Charlotte, N.C., and I was the first person that he presented for confirmation when he came to that parish. I was a vestryman under him and was Treasurer most of the period when he was in Charlotte. I shall not speak about his kindly and lovable disposition, which is known to all men or of his great human attitude towards his fellowmen, but of his great policies in reference to the humane activities of our Church.

During his pastorate in Charlotte, the present St. Peters Church was built and later a Parish House. Recently his wisdom helped save this Church from being sold and a larger one built elsewhere, which from subsequent events would have been a misfortune. He took great interest in the type, plan and architecture of the Church and its style indicated the solidarity of our Church. He stood by, aided and encouraged the fine men and women who helped found the Thompson Orphanage, St. Peters Hospital and the Good Samaritan Hospital - all now in good financial condition considering the deflated times,

representing the fruits of our Christian religion.

Shall I speak of his efforts in behalf of Valle Crusis, St. Mary's School, St. Augustonie School for colored people, and his general helpfulness in the progress of the Kingdom in this Diocese and Nation? We who knew him well admired and loved him, and leaned on him for advice in weighty matters, now sadly miss him. He believed in old-time honesty and was himself the soul of honor.

St. Marks Church, Hopewell section, was in part the child of his labors and he was deeply attached to this people. The fine citizenship of this Church has had an ennobling influence, not only in this locality but elsewhere.

He has gone to his blessed reward and his memory and example are a blessing and benediction to the Church and to those who come after. He died in Raleigh on December 27th, 1932.

Archdeacon Osborne's career is a romance. His life would thrill the youth of this land if written. He was born near Moulton, Alabama, May 6, 1837, and was the son of Dr. Ephriam Brevard Osborne, who had a thrilling escape from Fort Mims, bringing with him a child 3 years old whom he strapped to his back to swim the river. His brother and some 330 men, women and children were massacred in the Fort by the Indians. His father fought with Jackson at New Orleans, moved later to Arkansas and then to Texas. The experience of the youth in those pioneer days was adventure which few experienced. As a young man in 1859 he turned his face back to North Carolina, the home of his forebears. The call to the colors of the Confederacy, in 1861, found him Captain of an Iredell County Company. During that bloody, unnecessary fratricidal conflict he was promoted to Major, Lt. Colonel and then Colonel.

He was wounded during the War time and time again, and at Spottsylvania Court House a portion of his right hand was shot off. I give one incident of his gallant conduct: At the Battle of Seven Pines when the fourth regiment had made its way through a thickly set abatis under a

murderous fire of musketry, grape and cannister and had reformed the shattered ranks within 60 or 70 yards of the enemy's redoubt, awaiting supports which had failed to come up, it was evident that the Regiment could not remain without being utterly destroyed. The men were failing rapidly and there was no time to be lost. Captain Osborne rushing to Major Grimes, who was sitting calmly on his iron-grey horse, seized his leg and attracted his attention. "Major", he shouted, "we can't stand this. Let us charge the works." "All right" cried the Major, "charge them, charge them." The Regiment was behind a Virginia zigzag fence. Captain Osborne rushed back to the front of his Company, leaped over the fence, waving his hat and sword, called on his Company to follow. Company H, the Hunting Creek guard from North Iredell, in splendid style, crossed the fence and rushed forward following their Captain and the whole Regiment instinctively took up the movement, yelling and firing as they advanced. On rushed the men with such impetuosity and determination that the enemy was driven before them and the works and six pieces of artillery were captured and the day was saved, though a fearful loss to the Regiment. Of 25 commissioned officers and 633 men, every officer except Maj. Grimes was killed or disabled, 339 men were killed or disabled on that field. Captain Osborne himself was wounded within a few rods of the breastworks.

In 1865 he married Fannie Swan Moore, a descendant of Colonial Governor James Moore, of South Carolina, and General Maurice Moore of Revolutionary fame, and a kinslady of Justice Alfred Moore of the Supreme Court of the United States. For over 60 years this charming and lovely lady was his help-meet, companion, assistant and guide. His tender consideration and solicitude for her was a part of his nobility of soul. Morning and evening in the sanctuary of their home he erected an alter of family prayer. He was a Chesterfield in manners, kind and considerate to the rich and poor alike.

After the War he became a lawyer and was Clerk

of the Superior Court of Mecklenburg County for about 10 years. He resigned this lucrative office and entered the Ministry of the Protestant Episcopal Church and was ordained a Deacon in 1877, and became the Rector of Calvary Church, Fletcher, N.C., at a small salary.

In 1887 he established the Thompson Orphanage and Training Institution, and was its Superintendent for 10 years. He died in October, 1926, in his 89th year.

He loved St. Marks and this people with a deep devotion. When he came back to his native heath, he lived with Aunt Peggy Osborne Davidson, not so far from this section, to whom he was devotedly attached. He began his work at St. Marks Jan. 1, 1885, at the time there was no Church building, it was shortly thereafter completed. He was in charge from 1885 through 1891, then again from 1894 to 1898, and again from 1900 to 1901, and 1903; 1904 and 1910.

A leading member was his kinsman and old comrade in arms, Albert McCoy. I never knew more devoted friends "Albert and Edwin". Perhaps no finer body of men and women anywhere than those who belonged to this Church. I give the names of some of the early members: Albert McCoy, Columbus W. McCoy, Robt. D. Whitley, Capt. Thos. Gluyas, John N. Blythe, Wilkins D. Price, James S. Kirksey, Robt. W. Blythe, Robt. V. Kerns, Benj. W. Houston, Wm. D. Jamison, N. J. Price, Maria Davis, Jennie D. Alexander, Mrs. Mary C. McCoy, David L. Bradford, and others. The influence of those of this Church who have gone before, and their children, wherever they have cast their lot, has been for righteousness and the progress of the Kingdom. Near this Church was the old home of another splendid member of this faith, Dr. Joseph M. Davidson, who moved to Charlotte. Bishop Cheshire became Rector of St. Peters Protestant Episcopal Church, Charlotte, in May 1881. I was then about 18 years of age, in the office of that great and good lawyer and churchman, Col. Hamilton C. Jones, studying law. Bishop Cheshire, with the co-operation of Col. Jones and others, laid the foundation for this Church of the living God.

Those soldiers of the Cross were constructive builders, never destructive. They had the vision of the Prophets of old.

For years the shepherd of this flock has been Rev. John L. Jackson, a man of consecrated life, who has done a noble Christian work here and at St. Martin's in Charlotte. Hold up his hands as Aaron and Hur stayed up the hands of Moses until the going down of the sun and Christian ideals shall conquer.

Bishop Cheshire and Archdeacon Osborne, these two saintly men who have crossed over the river and rest in the shade of the tree, on their earthly pilgrimage along life's broad highway, had a vision for Christ and his Kingdom. Let us emulate their example. The wise men of old, mark you wise men, who saw His star in the East, came to worship Him and followed that star till it came and stood over where the young child was, and when they saw the star they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.

"Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God."

"Well done, thou good and faithful servants."

A faint, light gray watermark of the United States Supreme Court building is centered in the background. The building features a classical design with four prominent columns supporting a triangular pediment.

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